

MARJORY ATHERTON WIGHTMAN

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Marjory Atherton Wightman

(1906 -)

Mrs. Wightman, the daughter of Frank Cooke and Eleanore Simpson Atherton, was born in Honolulu. She graduated from Punahou School in 1924 and from Vassar College in 1928 with a degree in music.

In 1929 she married Dr. Francis J. Halford, a surgeon who had interned at Queen's Hospital, and had four children. After Dr. Halford's death in 1953 she married Chauncey Beech Wightman, now a retired business executive.

Mrs. Wightman's affiliations include the Junior League of Honolulu, YWCA, Vassar Club, Outdoor Circle, and the Friends of Foster Garden.

This transcript contains her reminiscences and provides a comprehensive view of a prominent person's lifetime experiences.

Lynda Mair, Interviewer

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INTERVIEW WITH MARJORY ELIZABETH ATHERTON WIGHTMAN
(MRS. CHAUNCEY BEECH WIGHTMAN)

At her Manoa home, 2022 Kākela Drive, Honolulu 96822

October 20, 1971

W: Marjory Atherton Wightman

M: Lynda Mair, Interviewer

M: I've got down all of your parents, children, et cetera. [Parents: Frank Cooke and Eleanore Simpson Atherton. Children by first husband, Dr. F.J. Halford, deceased: Eleanore Joan Halford (Mrs. Frederick William) Rohlfing; Juliette Montague Halford (Mrs. Robert) Brdecko; Frank Atherton Halford; Peter Halford. Married Chauncey Beech Wightman, October 18, 1954. Marjory Elizabeth Atherton Wightman was born in Honolulu on June 26, 1906; graduated from Punahou School in 1924 and from Vassar College in 1928; and married Dr. Francis J. Halford on August 29, 1929.]

What I'm interested in is perhaps family stories that you recall, things about your own parents, about their family, your own experiences growing up here.

W: That's a big order.

M: Yes, it is.

W: Of course this will be not contiguous if you want me to reminisce about things which might be of interest.

M: Yes, that's the idea; and then I sort of shuffle it around and make a more coherent thing out of it, so don't worry about the continuity.

W: Well, of course one of the most interesting early things when you look at this valley is that the family's home, which is now the University of Hawaii president's home, was about the sixth house in the whole Manoa valley.

M: And that's where you grew up.

W: That's where we were all born--there at the house, the

three of us--and where we grew up. I remember my mother saying that when Dad bought that property in 1901 or so, he and Mother had been living down where the HRT [Honolulu Rapid Transit Company] car barns are [at Alapai and King streets]. That was the old family home, Fernhurst, and he bought this as an investment but said he would never bring his bride to live way out here in the country. (Lynda chuckles) Well, Mother did like the place and so they built in 1901 or 1902. I don't know.

M: They had the house built themselves?

W: But they built the house, yes, and there's where we grew up. And of course we watched the paving of Kamehameha Avenue that went around the property. It was nothing but a dirt road when I was a kid. We always walked to Punahou [School] across Atherton Road. When it was being paved, which was asphalt at the time, we'd all grab a chunk of soft asphalt and chew it on the way to school.

M: Chew it?

W: Yes! (Lynda laughs) I guess it's as good as charcoal or something to whiten your teeth. We all chewed asphalt.

The streetcar went around and went up to what is now the Montague Cookes' place [at 2802 Oahu Avenue] and turned around and came back. We used to ride the streetcars, of course, and there was one conductor whose name was Mr. Ostergaard. None of us kids ever had any money but he had a little black book and every Friday he'd tell us how much we owed him and we'd pay for our rides for the week, back and forth.

M: So you didn't have to carry your money every day.

W: So we didn't carry the money or we didn't have it or we couldn't be bothered, but he knew everybody of course and there weren't too many places.

M: Well, you didn't have any immediate neighbors then, or did you?

W: Oh yes, we did when I was a kid. There were neighbors. Yes, the University [of Hawaii] got started and there were some homes down here on Lanihuli [Drive] about the same time the boarding house was built, which is on the corner by the two Ziegler sisters. That was a boarding house; still is. (clock chimes) There were a few houses on Lanihuli Drive and some on Hyde Street and Hunnewell [Street] and then we had several friends farther up the valley; the Montague Cookes who were cousins and whom we

grew up with lived there. Lei Rohrig's home was on Liloa Rise. [Leilani Rohrig (Mrs. Herbert Montague) Richards] And [the Stanley] livingstons were our neighbors and so were the Lewis kids. That's Mr. and Mrs. Abe [Abraham] Lewis. The Lewis daughter [Marion] is now Mrs. [Oliver S.] Picher and Dudley [Cushman] Lewis, of course, is one of the attorneys here that grew up across the street.

M: That's the son.

W: That's the son, uh huh. They have two daughters; the other one [Elizabeth Lewis (Mrs. Jerome Howe) Searl] lives in the East. We all walked across to school and picked up the gang on Atherton Road.

M: What's Atherton Road?

W: Atherton Road is the one that joins from. . . . Do you know my family's place?

M: Yeh.

W: All right. It goes catty-cornered across and meets McKinley Street down there. That's Atherton Road--the diagonal--and the Henry Judds lived there. Frank [Case Judd] and [David] Stuart [Judd] went to school with us. And so did Margaret [Mrs. Henry A.] White who was a Thrum. They lived on Atherton Road. And the Deans--two Dean kids. And subsequently Arthur Dean was--I guess he was president or regent as it were of the University [of Hawaii] plus being in Alexander & Baldwin.

We had a cow and horses on our property. Daddy used to ride and the place was fenced off.

M: How much acreage did they actually have?

W: About two and a half acres. We milked the cow, and the back part of it was planted in sorghum.

M: Sorghum?

W: Um hm, for the cow feed, you know.

M: Uh huh.

W: And we had all kinds of houses. I'll tell you one cute story. We had a cook for years, Yama, a tiny little Japanese man who was wonderful to us kids. It was a ritual that we had chicken every Sunday for lunch after church and sometimes we had guests and sometimes we didn't. And homemade ice cream. However, Yama asked for a day off

during the week several times, which I can remember, to go down to the piers because his family had sent him a picture bride. And I remember Dad always hoped Yama would get married because he was so nice to all of us kids and our friends and so forth. He had come back two or three times and no marriage, nothing. Finally Daddy said to Yama, "Yama, why don't you get married? You love children and they all love you. You ought to have your own family." And Yama's reply was: "Mr. Atherton, I tell you why. You know, I love baseball. Every Sunday afternoon is baseball game." And Daddy had said, "Yes, I know." And he said, "You have lunch every Sunday and when I hear the streetcar go up the valley I know it will be back in twelve minutes. So I get the dishes done fast and I run down and I can jump over the fence and I can catch the streetcar and I get the first inning. If I have a wife with her long kimono, she no can jump the fence so I miss the first inning. I don't want a wife." (Lynda laughs) That's the truth. So that was that.

M: He never got married?

W: Nope, he never got married. He was with us for many years. What else do you want to know?

M: Well, can you tell me anything about your parents?

W: Well, of course Daddy's great love as far as a hobby was not only his collection of calabashes, which Pug [Alexander Simpson Atherton] and I have now and the grandchildren, but flowers. He cross-pollinated hibiscus for years because the property across the street down there, which is now all full of homes, was his for awhile, which must have been a good acre. Besides vegetables and cut flowers, he had hundreds of hibiscus bushes and he cross-pollinated and he loved to garden. That cross-pollination was rather fast because you had a flower from the result within a year.

Then, of course, he was one of the early ones with Mr. [Edward Davies] Tenney who started orchids here--the orchid collection. Mr. Tenney preceded him a little bit. Mr. Tenney was president of Cattle & Cooke when Dad was an officer too. In 1918 Daddy bought somebody's collection of orchids--I don't know, a few hundred plants--and he was virtually one of the pioneers of bringing orchids here. Of course now they're a dime a dozen but they're still beautiful flowers. (clock chimes) He'd go down to the orchid house and sprinkle before he went to work and when he came home, and he knew all the flowers and plants like his kids.

We were the great outdoor people. I remember as

youngsters, before all this jazz of TV and whatnot, we had our own fun because we had so many picnics. We had the old place at Luakaha [4121 Pali Road], which now belongs to the [Thurston] Twigg-Smiths--our place does--and of course the [Frank E.] Midkiffs live up there [at 4151 Pali Road. We took turns, family-wise, every summer of spending two or three weeks up there.

M: The Cookes had the place too, didn't they?

W: Yes, the [Charles Montague] Cookes had the place before we did but just above, where the Midkiffs live now, were and still are two homes. And so between my Grandmother Atherton and ourselves and the [Charles Henry] Charlie Atherton family--Juliette [Montague Atherton (Mrs. John Buel)] Guard is one of them--we divvied up the summers. And the Richards. You see, [Herbert Montague] Monte Richards is my first cousin. Ah, we loved that.

And then in 1913 Daddy bought a place at Kahala which right now, within the last couple of years, Aku [Hal Lewis] owns. But we sold it to a Mrs. Hill who built an entirely new house, but that's not the story. However, we did have that place at Kahala when there were exactly twelve homes between Black Point and Waialae Golf Club, only on the beach because across from the beach homes was all charcoal-making, charcoal-burning. All of us kids picked kiawe beans all summer long and we sold them for fifteen cents a bag to the cattle people and horse people.

But we loved Kahala and that was country. It was the old wind-'em-up long distance telephone. When you had nothing to do, why, you picked up the phone and listened to what everybody was talking about down the line. (Lynda laughs) [Oldtime telephone users were connected with the exchange by a single circuit known as a party line which served two or more parties.] That was really country. Mother didn't come in to luncheons or anything else when we were out there. The road was hideous from where La Pietra is now [2933 Poni Moi Road] around Diamond Head. It was nothing but coral chuckholes.

M: Oh wow. You got there by horse.

W: Oh, we drove. No, no, we drove. I was born in 1906 but by the time we bought that place we had a car. I don't remember what it was then but we had a jalopy of some sort.

M: What would you do, go out there and stay a couple of weeks at a time?

W: Yes, we usually stayed at least a month.

M: Did you get to the beach any other time?

W: Yes, we used to go down to the Outrigger [Canoe Club] by streetcar. We took the Manoa car and went down to where Times Market now is [on King Street near McCully Street] and then you transferred and you went across the duck ponds, which was the McCully Street bridge, and then onto Kalakaua Avenue. We'd spend the day at the Outrigger and that was almost every Saturday. I went so often with Marion Lewis and Alexa Gignoux who is now Mrs. Siator Miller who lives right down on Haena Drive--Damon Street--just below here.

We'd go to Haleiwa now and again for a week or two and stay at the old Haleiwa Hotel that the [Clifford] Kimballs started.

M: Is that still there, the Haleiwa Hotel?

W: That's recently been razed, so I've read.

M: Yeh, seems to me I did read something about it.

W: But it was still standing a few years ago. Mother's interest and hobby, besides a lot of community things she did, was music. She was a very fine pianist and did some singing. I majored in music at college. But she was quite active in musical circles and stuff like that. Of course she was very interested in the YWCA and was it's secretary and president and one thing and another for many years.

M: Your mother's parents were . . .

W: My mother's parents were Simpson and she herself was born in Lansing, Michigan, but her father was a minister and so they had a number of different homes. Western New York they lived for a long while and also some place in Ohio, but she was born in Lansing and she had one younger brother who was subsequently a surgeon and lived in Detroit, Michigan. [Reverend Charles and Mary E. Sherrill Simpson]

M: Your mother came out here by herself, did she?

W: She came out here in 1900, I think, to teach at Mauanolu Seminary. [Miss Eleanore Simpson was teaching at Maunaolu Seminary as early as 1898.] And on the way out she was a roommate or shipmate of a Miss Lemon who was met by the Atherton family. I guess the Atherton family knew Miss Lemon or knew of her and they met Miss Lemon and Miss Lemon brought my mother along and that was the first introduction that Mother had to the family she later joined.

- M: Do you know the circumstances of your parents' meeting and how they happened to?
- W: My parents' meeting? Not exactly. Actually my mother was more or less courted by Dad's older brother at first and then Dad took over or something like that. (Lynda laughs) I still have their wedding gift book, but they went to Europe on their honeymoon and I still have that album of the pictures. And then they eventually built this house.
- M: When did your family move out of this house?
- W: Out of this house? Well, not until my mother died. Father died in 1945 and then Mother and my older brother, who died in 1961 and was not married, lived there. But Ballard died in 1961 and then Mother was hospitalized for two years and I guess it was 1965 when she passed away. And then we eventually, within a year or so, gave the house to the University [of Hawaii].
- M: So you'd had the house for sixty years or so.
- W: Um hm.
- M: Wow.
- W: I went to Vassar [College] from Punahou--five of us.
- M: Did you go to Punahou all through?
- W: I went all the way through Punahou and five of us went to Vassar together.
- M: What do you mean, five of you?
- W: Five girls from Honolulu.
- M: Oh.
- W: We were a quintet when we arrived and of course it was six days by boat and four days across the continent.
- M: So you didn't come home often. (chuckles)
- W: No, we didn't come home period, except summers. And it was funny that us kanaka kids--because the ones that got homesick at college were the ones that lived right in New York State. None of us got homesick; it was hopeless.
- M: Yeh. (laughter) Yeh.

W: But it did so happen that my third year Evelyn Johnson [Mrs. Robert] Cochran, who now lives in St. Louis and was a very close friend of mine, [her] father was taken very ill here and the family sent for her from Vassar. And she really made a record because she got to San Francisco--of course trains were easy enough to catch everyday but there's only a weekly sailing from San Francisco to home. But she got to San Francisco the day before the weekly boat so she got home in ten days. Now you can eat lunch in New York and dinner in Honolulu.

M: Yeh, wow. So you'd come home every summer.

W: We'd come home summers, um hm.

M: You majored in music, you said.

W: Um hm, music. No, I loved it. I loved Vassar. We had a very good time. Helen Hitchcock [Mrs. Yale Candee Maxon] was a classmate. She's [David] Howard Hitchcock, the famous painter's daughter and she went to school here with me. And Louise Erdman [Mrs. Charles J.] Henderson and Lei [Rohrig (Mrs. Herbert Montague)] Richards (clock chimes) and Dora Cooke [Mrs. Steven A.] Derby and Mary [Douglas] Alexander who is now Mrs. Gordon Smith. We all went together. They [other students at Vassar] couldn't imagine how we learned the English language and what kind of houses we lived in.

M: I imagine that back in those days people had some strange ideas.

W: It was funny. It was funny. No, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. I've done a lot of traveling and of course more so in these last fifteen years but there's no place like Hawaii, particularly for rearing children. I lived in New York City for eight months in 1947 when the youngest of the kids was two years old and we were there from September to April. I tell you, the winter with a small youngster in and out of snow clothes and in an apartment in a great big place like Manhattan. . . .

M: I know what you mean.

W: And oh, we did have a park below us--a very nice playground kind of business--but day after day, week after week, no leaves, no flowers, nothing but gray sky. I missed the flowers tremendously when I went to Vassar. I loved the change of scene, of seasons, and the campus was beautiful--is a beautiful campus--and of course we had a lot of green because there were so many conifers and ever-

greens--that was fine and dandy--but all of us kanaka kids spent all the spare money we had putting flowers in the room. (Lynda laughs)

M: Yeh, I can understand; it'd be a shock. Did you come back to Hawaii to live right after you finished at Vassar?

W: Yes, I finished at Vassar and came back. I finished in 1928 and in 1929 I married Dr. [Francis J.] Halford who had interned here at Queen's Hospital. He died of a heart attack in 1953. He had come here and interned for a year and a half, and then went into practice with Dr. [James Robert] Judd and Dr. [Edwin Dearborn] Kilbourne. And he'd just started practice as it were when I met him.

M: Where did you live when you were . . .

W: Right here. We built this house.

M: Oh, this is the house.

W: Um hm. We lived for a year and a half up the valley--we rented--and then in 1931 we built this place and here we are still. (Lynda chuckles)

M: Yeh.

W: Mr. [Chauncey Beech] Wightman and I were married in 1954.

M: Yeh, I understood that you had and this was your second marriage due to your children's [family name of Halford]. Well, Donald [Mair] knows some of your children too.

W: Yes. The children are scattered, as far as my children are concerned. One daughter's here; one daughter lives in northern California; and the baby, Peter, is a resident in San Francisco. He attended medical school at Tulane University. The older boy we lost in 1968 but his little widow [Kenny Hutchinson Halford] lives in San Jose, [California] with two little boys.

And then Mr. Wightman's son works for Lockheed in Burbank, California and his daughter is here. So between the West Coast and here, why, the gang's around. And they visit. That's why we hang onto this big, sprawly place--so we have room for the grandchildren.

M: Yeh, you have a big family. Can you recall any other interesting stories from the good old days as a child? Any family crises or exciting things. For instance, did your parents entertain a lot? Do you remember big parties or any big events of that kind?

W: Oh yes. The biggest thing they did--I mean the thing they most liked to do after Dad got interested in orchids, they loved to give them away and it was rather rare for people to receive orchids in those times. But they used to have orchid teas (clock chimes) about twice a year when the different varieties were in profuse bloom and he would take people through the orchid house and, you know, [they would serve] tea and punch and cookies and all that jazz. Yes, they entertained as one does, always in the home. I think everyone did then because there just weren't restaurants here, except for the old Young Hotel and the Moana Hotel. But it was always home entertaining.

I can tell you a funny instance of the family which had to do with my brothers. I told you about the sorghum patch in the backyard. It was because of one of their antics that the edict or law prohibiting the sale of dynamite to minors came about. My two brothers and [Frederick Parsons] Fred Lowrey and Edgar [Craig] Schenck, who subsequently was the director of the art academy here [Honolulu Academy of Arts], decided to blow a hole to China, as it were, in the backyard. When they got down to pickax digging, where it was pretty hard, they decided to buy some dynamite. So they went to Lewers & Cooke and they bought some dynamite and they stuck it in the hole and they shot it off.

M: Oh my gosh!

W: And as it happened, my grandmother always lived with us--she was widowed in 1913--and she was, as it were, babysitting because Dad and Mother were on one of the other islands. And the neighborhood went pretty much berserk. I don't remember whether windows were blown out or something. Whatever damage happened was more or less minor but it was very noisy and there were some complaints. (Lynda laughs) When Dad and Mother came home, why, they sort of went to the root of the matter and found out, sure, these kids took their small change and they went down and got two sticks of dynamite and had themselves a ball. But it was pretty dangerous doing so subsequently kids can't go down and buy dynamite now. But some years ago Fred Lowrey . . .

M: How old were the boys then?

W: Oh, they were I suppose nine, ten, eleven--something like that age.

M: Pretty young to be messing around with explosives.

W: Daddy was a great collector of calabashes. He did have a beautiful collection and we still do.

M: How would he come by them?

W: Oh, through old Hawaiian friends of his. He was always lending a helping hand to different Hawaiians and he'd buy calabashes. I think he loved them and knew that eventually they would be museum pieces as it were. And we had in the dining room down at the old house several glass cases and there were stories about the artifacts and so forth. But came a time when Mother said, "No more calabashes, Frank. There's no more room."

We had a back staircase from the kitchen to upstairs and one day I went to the kitchen and Daddy was climbing the stairs with two calabashes, looking rather sheepish, and I didn't think anything about it. He said, "Please don't tell your mother. I'm putting the calabashes in the attic. She said I couldn't get any more because there's no room for them." (Lynda laughs) So I didn't tell my mother but she knew they were there.

M: Yeh. That's an interesting old clock.

W: My husband made that.

M: Made it?

W: He's just finished his twenty-fourth or fifth grandfather clock. Mr. Wightman has a big shop out here.

M: Oh for heaven's sake. He just does it as a hobby.

W: As a hobby. He always did. And then, of course, he retired seven years ago and he makes furniture. He's made most of this furniture: that, these, card table and chairs, that chest, clock, the veranda furniture.

M: Oh my goodness.

W: He's made mostly grandfather clocks, but he's made a number of grandmother clocks which are twelve inches shorter, and the little grandmother clock which is the small standing clock, plus shelf clocks--carriage clocks. The works come from Germany but he does all the cabinet work. He has a huge shop and he loves it.

M: He must have; they look so professional.

W: Yes.

M: Beautiful. You mean he puts the works in?

W: Yeh, the works come from Germany but he puts them in. He

knows how to fix them and what to do with them.

M: Wow.

W: Yes, that's a very pretty one. I like that pendulum.

M: Yeh. Well, what have you done, other than raise your family? What sort of things?

W: Well, I've been active in Punahou School as a trustee for the last six or seven years. And I'm very interested in Fernhurst which is, of course, an offshoot of the YWCA that I sort of inherited from Mother. And I'm still not active but interested in the Junior League where I was active for many years in what they do. And I've had different sorts of jobs in connection with Central Union Church. I like my flowers; I like my garden.

M: The Atherton family's longtime pillars of that church, huh?

W: Yes, the Atherton Chapel is a sort of memorial to Dad. And I like to garden. I like to travel.

M: Did you keep up your music at all?

W: Yes, I kept up my music until about five years ago when I got bursitis and I suppose just the tension of practicing and all acted it up. I had a lovely Steinway so we sold that and subsequently part of the proceeds went to a small upright [piano] for one of the grandsons who was quite musical, but their home wouldn't take a grand piano. I still love music but I don't play it anymore. I wish I did; I miss it.

M: Um hm. I'm a pianist too. I just finished my master's degree at the University [of Hawaii] a couple of years ago.

W: I was sorry not to hear the symphony the other night. Did you hear it?

M: No, I didn't. I wanted to go kind of and then, I don't know. Somehow I don't enjoy the symphony as much as I do some of the other things, and it's such a big effort for us to get into town.

W: Um hm. Pup and I have kept the calabashes and the children have some and I've kept most of the Hawaiiana which Dad had, as far as books go, which Dad was very interested in. And I'm sorry to say I'm very poor in Hawaiian his-

tory. Mr. Wightman knows a lot more of Hawaiian history than I do. We didn't have to take it at school as they do now and I think it's a wonderful thing that all the kids have to.

END OF SIDE 1/1ST TAPE

M: Let's see, who was it that I talked to? I guess it was Dr. Steele Stewart. Dr. Stewart mentioned that your father was--how did he put it? Well, his integrity and his very straight way of dealing with people and all this. (clock chimes) I wanted to ask you--as a parent, being from a strongly religious sort of a background and all, was he . . .

W: Oh, he was a very loving parent to all of us kids, yes, very much so; and very much of an understanding parent. He was strict but there was a reason. We were brought up strictly: no cards on Sunday, no sewing on Sunday, no movies on Sunday; and we accepted it--that was all there was to it.

M: Your family all went to church on Sunday?

W: We all went to church. We went to Sunday School and church. In the afternoons we often went on a picnic or a ride. One of our favorite rides when we were youngsters was to Moanalua Gardens. 'Course that was then owned by the Damons and the gardens where the great big beautiful monkeypods are now were populated with not only lily ponds, but little Japanese pagodas and teahouses and bridges and all that sort of thing.

M: Really?

W: Yes. Oh, it was a haven for kids.

M: I've always thought those trees were just the most beautiful things.

W: We often went out there.

M: That was quite a jaunt.

W: Yeh, it was a jaunt, um hm. We often went to the top of Wilhelmina Rise. I don't know why but there was some countryside up there. There was no formal park area but it was winding roads. What is now Sierra Drive was macadam but winding; and such a beautiful view from the top. We liked that.

- M: Did your parents take you children traveling with them or anything like that?
- W: Yes, yes, about every other year we went someplace or other. We went to Glacier Park one summer. We went to Yellowstone Park; we went to Mt. Rainier; we went to southern California. We went to Detroit a couple of times to visit my mother's brother. We went to Alaska one of the summers when I was in college and we went up the Northwest--Vancouver and Victoria. We didn't actually go east to New York or those big cities just to go. Yes, we had been but the summer, you know, for youngsters or teenagers is not New York. That's why we did a number of the national parks. Yes, they liked to travel and it was about every other year that we went. Of course it was all ship travel which I've always loved and which we have done until the last five years. Of course now there are no more Matson ships back and forth, and there's a very different sort of a crowd from what it used to be.
- M: Um hm. Did your parents make a ritual--or what would you call it?--of mealtimes?
- W: Oh yes, we always had grace before meals and we were always there--you didn't dawdle in. Breakfast was at seven o'clock and we were there. Of course we had to go to school. In those days we had help and so we sat down. The more or less religious part of it was that we often had what you might call morning prayers. Somebody recited a Psalm before breakfast.
- M: Hm. It was just sort of rotated around.
- W: Yeh, rotated around.
- M: Were you expected to come, if it was your turn, prepared or something?
- W: Oh, I don't know, we learned the Psalms. It was just part of Sunday School, I guess, and growing up. And so Daddy would say, "Well, Ballard, you can do the Twenty-first Psalm this morning" or something like that, and he did.
- M: And he could recite it, huh?
- W: Um hm.
- M: Did the children come home for lunch from school?
- W: No, we took a lunch. We took our lunch and then eventually there was the cafeteria. But we all took our lunch and

ate it around the lily pond.

M: Did the people dress up for dinner at home?

W: No.

M: You didn't.

W: Hm um, not as a family.

M: Um hm. Did your parents frequently have guests for dinner?

W: Oh well, not in a formal way but because of their affiliations or interests, particularly in some of the schools and hospitals and churches or universities in the Far East --in Japan and China, there were often missionaries or friends of missionaries or missionary families that stopped over. The ships would stay here for I don't remember how long before continuing and there were many times when somebody who was from Japan or China would have lunch or dinner or spend the night. (clock chimes) Often there were children. The house was big. It wasn't a huge mansion but we had a guest room and sometimes another bed if there were children.

Of course I was right here in this home in December of 1941 when the blitz occurred. That was rather an exciting day. Well, that's a story of its own.

I went after that, in February of 1942, to Palo Alto for a year and three months with the youngsters and there were so many Island people that settled there that they called it Palilu. (Lynda laughs) We were all busy with our little families and the time went fast. We had no time to weep and wail; we were just too busy keeping house and PTA-ing and washing clothes for small fries.

M: Did your husband come with you?

W: No. That was Dr. Halford. He was a surgeon. He was stuck here. In fact, Dr. Stewart himself moved into this house, and one other man. We had a Japanese cook and so the three men lived here. And I lived in Palo Alto, very near Alexa Gignoux Miller and her two boys. And Peggy Anderson, Alec Anderson's wife, and their kids were there. They were closeby. Lei Richards and her family went to St. Paul. But eventually we all got home.

M: How did you decide it was time to come home?

W: After the Battle of Midway. Of course we were not ordered out, because we were not military families, but we were

strongly advised to leave, which we did. But after the Battle of Midway they did allow space for civilians to return, so we came back.

When we went over in February we were in a convoy of nine ships and we were on one of the Matson boats--I've forgotten which, the Lurline or the Matsonia--and the usual passenger list, as far as count was concerned at that time, was between three and four hundred passengers. We were eighteen hundred women and children. Not a chair, except in the dining room, on that whole ship. The bunks were triple decks. We couldn't leave the room without our life jackets. When you sat on the deck, which of course we could do and let the kids play around, you sat on the deck with your life preserver on still. (Lynda chuckles) We came back without a convoy. It was safer then.

M: Did you have all four of your children?

W: No, I had three then. The other one was born in 1944 after we got home. In fact, after we did get home the city was a mess of barbed wire and makeshift buildings and all. It was crummy-looking. And I do remember the older boy who was then seven, I guess--six and a half or seven--and I had the kids in the car, went somewhere and said, "Oh, did you ever see such a mess!" and this child said, "But look at the golden shower!" (Lynda chuckles) Out of the mouths of babes.

M: Uh huh. You mentioned a grandmother. Was that the Atherton side? [Mary Elizabeth Sherrill (Mrs. Charles) Simpson]

W: No, that's my mother's father and mother. He was the minister and when he retired in about 1905 or '06 I guess it was, just before I was born, they came out here to live. Because Grandmother was here when I was born and my grandfather I do remember but he died when I was seven. Grandmother stayed on and made her home with us and was a wonderful grandmother. Well, we never knew anything else; Grandma was there but she fitted so perfectly into the household and she was a darling grandmother to us kids. Because Dad did do some traveling for business and also he and Mother went away now and again just for pleasure, but Grandma was there and took the reins.

M: Uh huh. Do you remember your grandparents on your father's side at all? [Joseph Ballard and Juliette Cooke Atherton]

W: Oh yes, I remember my Grandmother Atherton. My Grandfather Atherton died before I was born but, oh, Grandma Atherton was a wonderful little woman. She was tiny and she was a crackerjack domino player. Of course she was very

strict and religious (Lynda laughs), but she had a wonderful sense of humor and she loved all her grandchildren. We always went there, during her life, for Christmas--all the Guards and Athertons and Richards. It was a big clan. She was a very lovable person to us youngsters. She died in 1919 or '20, something like that.

M: Gee, let's see, she must have been quite advanced in years at that point, huh?

W: She was in her seventies I guess. She wasn't what you might say real old. My Grandmother Simpson, Mother's mother, lived until she was ninety-five and she was very active the whole time. Her brain never faltered. She was a tremendous reader and she did a lot of sewing. About the last three years she became quite deaf, not drastically so but she was deaf and that was before the hearing aids became what they are, you know. But her brain never faltered.

M: Hm. That's a friendly dog.

W: Yes, she's getting old.

M: She brought me something here and dropped it on my foot. (laughs)

W: Oh yes, she wants to play.

M: That's cute.

W: Of course as soon as you go I'll think of other things, but you catch me cold.

M: It is hard to dredge these things up on the spur of the moment.

W: We went to the volcano [on Hawaii] as youngsters quite often and that's when it was active continually. There was no cessation. Daddy was a very good friend of old George Lycurgus. Oh, we'd sit at the edge of the pit night after night and just watch the fountains.

M: Wow. Did your parents take you to the outside islands sometimes?

W: Um hm, mostly to Hawaii, but we went with them to the other islands too. But we seemed to like Hawaii the best. Perhaps it was because of the Volcano House and all that area, which we liked.

- M: Would you go, like for a weekend or . . .
- W: No, we'd usually go for a week. It was usually during vacation time when we went--Easter or summer. The old inter-island ships left here at three in the afternoon (clock chimes) and got to Hilo at six the next morning.
- M: No one's ever explained to me--what did you do all that time? Did you just sort of sit?
- W: You mean on the ship?
- M: Uh huh.
- W: We were kids then. There was always something to do I guess. Sometimes we got seasick and moaned and groaned in those island channels, but we sat on deck. We read; we played games; passed the time. Of course from the time [you left] you watched the island fade into the distance on deck until you got into the Molokai Channel, and then quite often you went down below because you were sick or something. If you weren't, why, there was dinner time and we went to bed and at dawn we were up, so there wasn't any problem with hour upon hour.
- M: I see.
- W: Now we go from here to Hilo in forty-five minutes.
- M: Yeh. (chuckles)
- W: Dad and Mother did fly there on one of the first Clippers. When it was twenty hours from here to San Francisco, that was something.
- M: Not many people ever went on those trips, I understand, because they were terribly expensive for one thing.
- W: Yeh, they were expensive. I don't remember what the fare was. It seems to me I recall that it was \$250 or \$300.
- M: One way I think, huh?
- W: One way, yes. (long pause)
- M: Well . . .
- W: As far as my childhood and school years here, it was most enjoyable all the way. We had lots of friends and we made our own fun.

M: Like what?

W: Oh, picnics. And so many of us had, oh, more or less spacious grounds and we played policeman and robber, and paper chase and whatnot all up and down the valley, just working off steam as kids do. But there were the trees and we were all tree-climbers. And there were the grounds and there was the space and there wasn't the traffic.

M: Did you have your own horses?

W: I didn't, no. My dad did but the horses were gone by the time I was ready for school. We spent one summer, when I was ten, on a sort of farm out of Seattle, [Washington] and that's where I learned to ride horseback because there were two horses there. My uncle from Detroit, [Michigan] and his wife and three kids joined us and we had a big rambling house for that summer. I was the oldest of the six of us and that's where I learned to ride horseback, but Dad's horses were gone before that.

I do remember one of his early cars because when we went out at night and when we went out if it was raining, we had to take out the back seat and get the isinglass curtains out from under the seat and clip them in all over the windows.

M: What were they for?

W: To keep the rain out. You see, no windows in the old cars, you know.

M: Just the frame.

W: Just the frame and you snapped the curtains in. Horrible job. (Lynda laughs) Gee, I sound like an old bat. Hmm. But it's fun to remember.

M: Uh huh. It always sounds like everything was so much more work then, but then you have to stop and think that people didn't probably try to do quite so many things all at the same time then either.

W: Of course life was more leisurely; there wasn't the push and shove that there is now. It took a long while to get places and I don't think there was the pressure. I remember Dad was very, very active and conscientious business-wise and busy as could be, but as far as young people, we didn't have so many diversions or complications.

M: Um hm. When you were at Punahou in your high school years, did they have social affairs and that sort of thing?

W: Oh yes, um hm. Of course we had football. We had all the athletics and those games, and they had dances in what is still Pauahi Hall. Upstairs there was where we had the dances and they were fun. And then there was always Campus Day--it was in May--(clock chimes) when all the kids literally cleaned up the campus and cleaned the cupboards and cleaned the basements and picked weeds. That was a great day. Oh yeh, we had social doings.

M: Someone I talked to not too long ago [Miss Jane Winne] was talking about how they weren't allowed to dance. Of course this was long before your time. This was a lady that graduated from Punahou about the time you were born [class of 1903] and they, I guess, were just starting to allow a little of it; at least they wouldn't come down too hard if you sort of went into a two-step, but they had marches where they just sort of marched about.

W: Uh huh. Oh no, we had dances and live orchestras.

M: Uh huh. I guess that was sort of gradually accepted because at first Punahou was so strongly missionary that this was frowned on and accomodated to the times.

W: Yes, I guess so.

M: Well, I don't want to keep you from the . . .

W: Oh, it's all right. I don't have to start scrambling until about a quarter of twelve.

My mother was a, I guess you might call her, packrat or Dad was too, because the attic was full of pictures and some of the drawers were, which I knew about. When we cleaned out that house, oh my, there was a lot there but there're certain pictures that I couldn't let go. They were even history to my folks because Dad was, I guess, eighteen when Queen Liliuokalani was dethroned [January 17, 1893], but he sat on the fence and watched the revolution. I remember Liliuokalani because she used to come to church every Sunday right across from Washington Place when Central Union [Church] was where subsequently Schuman Carriage [Company Limited] was before they came up here [to 1234 South Beretania Street]. Oh, she was a dear little thing, always in a black holoku. But he had pictures of that era in the collection. I've given some to the [State] Archives and so forth, which is really where they belong because our kids' houses aren't big enough to hoard all this stuff and, besides that, they disintegrate.

M: Right.

W: Some of the historical stuff is important. Then we've given some to the [Hawaiian] Mission Children's Society. I'm very keen on that; I think they've done a great job down there, particularly now, of turning it into an active museum--doing things with it. They've done a good job there.

We went religiously to the Cousins' Society every year. I still go when I can, when they count the Judds and the Cookes and all the missionary families (Lynda laughs), because it's always been a race between the Judds and the Cookes and it's kind of fun.

M: Yeh, very huge families, of which I'll never unravel all of the [genealogy or relationships].

W: Oh, I can't either, some of them.

M: I've just given up. Well, your family has also intermarried to quite an extent.

W: Yeh. What part of it though?

M: I'm not exactly sure which part or where, but the name crops up in people's names. You know, the middle name of someone will be Atherton So-and-So and I just assume that there must be some relation or other.

W: Oh yes. Yes, everybody had more or less large families.

M: There were three of you.

W: Yes, myself and two brothers.

M: And you were the oldest.

W: Yes. And there's four years before Ballard and then there's two and a half years between Ballard and Pug.

M: But were your parents--what would you say? Did they raise you to be a lady or did they treat you the same as the boys as far as . . .

W: As far as fairness? We just knew what we could do and what we couldn't do and rules were rules and we had an example with our parents as it were. And most everybody around, as far as our close friends, were practically brought up the same way. We didn't have what you might call drastic or fancy lessons in manners and dress and so forth, but we were just expected to behave when there was company and not rant around and take the conversation. We were punished when we didn't do things but I don't remem-

ber any violent punishment. Privileges were taken away and there was no doubt that it was not pleasing to Dad or Mother.

M: Um hm. Were you allowed to date, for instance?

W: Yes, um hm. I had a curfew; I had to be home at midnight.

M: What age was that?

W: At first only one of the two weekend nights, Friday or Saturday, not both. Finally, I guess when I was a junior, I was allowed both nights.

M: Well, that's pretty liberal really.

W: Yeh. But they had to know of course, as I did with my kids, where they were going and once in awhile it was to a movie. There were a good many parties, when there were parties, that were private-home parties--suppers--and you danced to a Victrola. Or picnics out in the country, out on the beaches. And we always had a chaperon; one of the parent couples went along too or something. We'd take picnic suppers and swim and goof off, sing, play baseball on the beach, things like that.

M: Quite a bit different than today. Our kids are just getting to that age, you know, and oh dear. (laughs)

W: Yeh, I'm glad I don't have to . . .

M: Cope with it now?

W: Cope with it.

M: Seems to be a pretty shattering experience for most of the parents I've talked to.

W: Well, the grandchildren mind me much better than my own children did. (Lynda laughs) They accept it. They know I mean business.

M: Uh huh.

W: I think it's awfully hard for a young mother not to repeat herself and repeat herself. I see it in the kids. I say it once and I tell them I mean it or else and, well, they still seem to love to come. (long pause)

M: Well, you've actually lived here all of your life except for short periods.

W: Um hm. Um hm, except for college and short periods. No, except the college years and the one year in New York, this has been the base. Of course we've traveled. Mr. Wightman and I have traveled a good deal, particularly since his retirement, and we go usually once a year to someplace or other but the most we've been gone has been two months. Now it's down to sort of a month. Five weeks is about as much as we like.

M: Um hm.

W: Traveling is wonderful. It's so amazing it's so fast now and it's different than even when Mr. Wightman and I started, let alone when I went abroad with my family in my college years one summer (clock chimes). The hoards and hoards of tourists and lines and crowds have enlarged tremendously.

M: Um hm. I've never been to Europe. I'm sort of not too interested in going anymore. It always sounds like it's-- well, I don't like queuing up for anything. We keep talking about a trip to China when (laughs) it opens up. That's really been our dream for years.

W: We just got back two weeks ago.

M: From Europe?

W: Yes. Actually we went around the world, but we were two weeks out of New York on a cruise down the St. Lawrence River and we got into Quebec and then the ship went right to Bermuda for two days. That was just two weeks. Then we flew to London and we were in the English countryside for five days. That was beautiful and gorgeous weather.

M: My, you were lucky.

W: And then we flew from London to Rhodesia. We've been on an African safari but we wanted to go to Rhodesia.

END OF SIDE 2/1ST TAPE

END OF INTERVIEW

Re-transcribed and edited by Katherine B. Allen

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THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In May 1971, the Watumull Foundation initiated an Oral History Project.

The project was formally begun on June 24, 1971 when Katherine B. Allen was selected to interview kamaainas and longtime residents of Hawaii in order to preserve their experiences and knowledge. In July, Lynda Mair joined the staff as an interviewer.

During the next seventeen months, eighty-eight persons were interviewed. Most of these taped oral histories were transcribed by November 30, 1972.

Then the project was suspended indefinitely due to the retirement of the foundation's chairman, Ellen Jensen Watumull.

In February 1979, the project was reactivated and Miss Allen was recalled as director and editor.

Three sets of the final transcripts, typed on acid-free Permalife Bond paper, have been deposited respectively in the Archives of Hawaii, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, and the Cooke Library at Punahou School.